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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [UG](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN SUDAN IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH LRA

REF: A. KHARTOUM 00900
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 00754
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 00713
[1](#)D. KAMPALA 00856

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) officials have confirmed newspapers reports that they have opened discussions with the Lord,s Resistance Army, which continues to terrorize the people of Southern Sudan. According to Minister for Culture, Youth, and Sports John Luk Jok, Riek Machar met recently with LRA second in command Vincent Otti at a village in LRA-controlled territory south of Maridi. This follows a series of negotiations with lower-level LRA representatives in Juba. Machar has requested a direct meeting with LRA leader Joseph Kony, but Kony is reportedly reluctant to surface for fear of being captured or killed. In these negotiations, the GoSS seeks to mediate between Uganda and the LRA, or at the very least convince the LRA to leave Southern Sudan. For a more detailed discussion, please refer to the related IIR (septel). End Summary.

Negotiations Underway

[1](#)2. (C) GoSS Secretary General Abdom Igua did not directly confirm the talks, but when he learned of the interview with Riek Machar in the Juba Post that discussed the meetings, he was willing to talk about the principles of the negotiations. Both Igua and Jok said that the GoSS is anxious to end the threat to security posed by the LRA, which they believe is still getting support from certain elements in Khartoum.

[1](#)3. (C) The GoSS believes it can serve as a mediator between the LRA and Uganda, although it admits that mediation will be difficult because the LRA seems to have no agenda beyond terror and the deification of Kony. At a minimum, they would like to strike a bilateral deal to convince the LRA to leave Southern Sudan and not attack its people.

Amnesty an Option?

[1](#)4. (C) Part of this deal may be an offer of amnesty and protection for any members of the LRA who defect. Uganda has a similar offer to the LRA which includes everyone but the five leaders indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is unclear if the GoSS would be willing to shelter these five, but they have complained to USG officials that the ICC indictments and the inclusion of the LRA on the list of terrorist organizations &limits their options.8

CONCLUSION AND COMMENT

15. (C) The LRA has proven to be an unreliable negotiating partner in the past. In 1994, when they were also severely weakened, they opened negotiations with the Uganda government. Not only did these negotiations turn out not to be serious, but they used that time to reorganize, recruit, and rearm, and then come back as strong as ever. This may be a similar attempt, as Otti reportedly said that a withdrawal of all Ugandan troops from Sudan and an end to anti-LRA operations was a precondition for negotiations. These talks are now stalled over Machar,s insistence on meeting directly with Kony, and Kony,s fear that the GoSS is setting a trap.
STEINFELD